

International Feminism, Domesticity, and the Interview in the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald*

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The Women's Penny Paper (1888–90), later the *Woman's Herald* (1891–93), was the first British feminist periodical to adopt the interview as a regular feature. Launched on October 27, 1888, it published over 160 interviews with famous and lesser-known women during the first four years of its run. This period largely coincided with the tenure of founding editor and prominent women's rights activist Henrietta Müller (1845?–1906), who edited the weekly paper under the pen name Helena B. Temple. The inquisitive format of the interview seemed to fit well with the paper's ambitions, as outlined in an editorial in the first issue: “[to reproduce] the ideas of the day in their freshest and newest form” and “reflect the thoughts of the best women upon all the subjects that occupy their minds.”¹ The fin-de-siècle interview, however, was a key vehicle of the New Journalism, famously dismissed by Matthew Arnold as “feather-brained” on account of its human interest stories, celebrity news, emotive reporting, and mass circulation.² As such, it seemed, in the words of F. Elizabeth Gray, to be an “unlikely weapon for political transformation,” and yet that is exactly what *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* became under Müller's editorship.³ This article builds on Gray's argument that the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* wrestled the interview from the sensationalist press to make it “fundamental to the feminist agenda of the paper.”⁴ It merges insights from periodical studies with Benedict Anderson's views on community formation and Bruno Latour's actor-network theory to examine how the interview's voyeuristic preoccupation with the domestic lives of individuals paradoxically enabled the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* to establish itself as a clearing house for emancipatory thinking and to attune the fragmented voices of early British feminism to the nascent international women's movement.

A Wide Array of Interviewees

The *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* began publication in the decade before “feminism” entered the British political vocabulary. Indeed, if a full-text search in Gale Cengage's *19th Century UK Periodicals* database can be relied upon, the word was never used in the paper until it was absorbed into the *Woman's Signal* (1894–99). Feminist activism emerged as a distinct political force in Britain from small-scale initiatives and local organizations championing issues such as education, employment, and the right to vote. The Women's Co-operative Guild was founded in 1883. In 1885, the mixed-sex Conservative Primrose League established a Ladies' Grand Council, and in 1886, the Women's Liberal Federation was formed from fifteen local Women's Liberal Associations. Organizations were often divided on the issues they addressed. British women's movements, in Jane Rendall's words, were “fractured, split by differences, allowing fragmentation and choices.”⁵ Female suffrage in particular was a site of ongoing discussion. It caused divisions in the Women's Liberal Federation and led to a schism in the National Society for Women's Suffrage in 1888. Early support from the Women's Co-operative Guild largely depended on the efforts of local branches. Meanwhile, the Primrose League kept its distance, arguing that it could not “enter into questions of contentious politics.”⁶

Within this atmosphere of conflict and debate, Henrietta Müller established the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* as explicitly non-partisan. An unsigned inaugural editorial, presumably written by Müller herself, announced that the paper would be “open to all shades of opinion, to the working woman as freely as to the educated lady; to the conservative and the radical, to the Englishwoman and foreigner.”⁷ These discussions were spread across the whole of the paper, including the news, articles, book reviews, and correspondence pages—with the Primrose League and the Women's Liberal Association “being placed amicably side by side,” as the *Scottish Leader* noted.⁸ Yet the policy was most evident in the interview section, where even

in the first few issues the choice of interviewees made for a varied line-up of women's voices. Following an interview in the opening number with Liberal suffragist and "pioneer worker in the cause of woman's rights" Priscilla Bright McLaren (1815–1906), the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* featured interviews with several younger-generation activists from diverse social and political backgrounds.⁹ At the time of publication, two found themselves in opposite camps over the Irish Home Rule question and the future of the National Society for Women's Suffrage (NSWS). While Millicent Garrett Fawcett (1847–1929) was heading the anti-Home Rule Liberal Unionists who objected to an affiliation between the NSWS and women's political organisations, Mrs. Ashton Dilke (1857–1914) was, by her own account, "strongly . . . in favour of Home Rule" and a prominent figure in the Women's Liberal Federation, whose members, Fawcett feared, would swamp the NSWS.¹⁰ Shortly afterwards, Fawcett's faction broke away from the NSWS when its members accepted an political affiliation at a special general meeting held at the Westminster Palace Hotel.

Meanwhile, as further testimony to its central mission, the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* ran interviews with Annie Besant (1847–1933), Amie Hicks (1839–1917), social purity campaigner Laura Ormiston Chant (1848–1923), and the painter Louise Jopling-Rowe (1843–1933). Like Mrs. Ashton Dilke, Besant and Hicks were seeking re-election to the London School Board at the time of the interviews. Both campaigned for women's rights in the context of the budding socialist and trade union movements, albeit from very different perspectives. Besant, of Irish middle-class descent, was interviewed shortly after organizing the highly publicized Bryant and May match girls' strike that led to the establishment of the Matchmakers' Union. Hicks's Labour candidacy for the School Board, as her interview reveals, was deeply motivated by memories of her own struggles as a working-class woman, including financial hardship, illness, and food shortages.

The *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* also honored its promise to serve as a mouthpiece for both the "Englishwoman and foreigner."¹¹ Under headings such as "Women Lawyers in France and Belgium," "Norwegian Women," and "The Marriage Question in Germany," it reported extensively on the situation of women and women's emancipatory efforts abroad. Their intellectual, cultural, and political achievements were also regularly included in the "Foreign News" and "Current News about Women" sections. In addition, the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* published more than forty interviews with non-British women from different walks of life, including Olga von Oertzen, a German physician; Marie Deraisme (1828–94), a French salon hostess and veteran women's rights activist; Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati (1858–1922), a young Indian social reformer; Francesca Stuart Sindici (1858–1929), a Spanish-Italian artist; and Olga Novikoff (c.1842-1925), a Russian expatriate author.

Domestic Spaces and the Interview

F. Elizabeth Gray identifies Edmund Yates's "Celebrities at Home" series in the popular six-penny weekly *World* (1874–1922) as a key model for the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald*, arguing that Müller's paper steered its own course by interviewing women only.¹² Yates's interviews with male celebrities tended to place women in the background as homemakers, helpmates, and hostesses. Lady Whitworth is shown reading the "last new novel" to her ageing husband in his billiard room; Père Hyacinth's wife "[holds] out her hand" to the interviewer "with a peculiarly pleasant welcome" as he enters the *salon* of their Genevan house; Lord Dufferin's wife pours afternoon tea for guests in a "beautifully furnished" drawing room; and the Duchess of Marlborough, "her husband's ever assiduous partner," sits in a "pleasant little" boudoir, "[going] over the list of names for the next week's dinners."¹³ Rather than being presented as individuals of interest in their own right, these women are subsumed into the domestic scene-setting that characterized the interviews in the *World*. As Richard Salmon has

argued, the home in Yates's series "functioned as a signifying space in which it became possible to represent public figures as creatures of privacy."¹⁴ Conflating domestic interiors with psychic interiority, the "physical exploration of the home was mapped on to a narrative of biographical revelation."¹⁵ In the male celebrity interview, women served as plot devices, driving the interviewer's quest for the celebrity's private self forward and inward.

When the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* made women to the focal point of interviews, it also amplified their association with the domestic sphere. Like Yates's trend-setting series, interviews *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* typically elaborated on the private settings in which the conversation had taken place, usually the interviewee's own home, studio, hotel room, or other private residence. The opening paragraphs in particular were punctuated with stock adjectives foregrounding the intimate character of these spaces. Archaeologist Jane Ellen Harrison (1850–1928) was interviewed in the "*pleasant* boudoir of her flat in Colville Gardens," temperance activist Margaret Bright Lucas (1818–1890) in her "*quiet* home in Bloomsbury," and social worker Catherine Ray in a "*dainty little* drawing-room, in a *pretty little* home on Hampstead Heath."¹⁶ The residence of Lady Wolverton, founder of the Needlework Guild, was "*beautifully* situated, with extensive views in all directions," and the drawing room of Mary Worley, a freshly minted Master of Arts, "looked out on a *pretty* garden."¹⁷ Even when women were interviewed in their work environment, traces of their private lives surfaced among the objects associated with their professional pursuits, such as the "vase of spring flowers peeping out from among the papers" on Florence Balgarnie's (1856–1928) writing table at the offices of the NSWS.¹⁸

Such attention to domestic detail may appear to sit uneasily alongside praise of Harrison's "rare powers of intellect and absolute genius" or Balgarnie's talent "not only [as] an efficient Secretary and Organiser, but one of the most effective speakers of the day."¹⁹ Indeed, the

Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald itself occasionally hinted at potential discrepancies between the private lives and public opinions of its interviewees. One interviewer makes a point of admiring the drawing room of Scottish novelist Mona Caird for its “cosy corners by the fireside” and “sense of repose and quiet content” before shifting to a discussion of Caird’s advocacy of free contract marriage and liberal divorce laws.²⁰ “Whatever may be Mrs. Mona Caird’s views upon marriage,” the interviewer comments, “she certainly is a wife who knows how to make home attractive in the matter of decoration.”²¹ According to Gray, passages such as these testify to the “particularly freighted role” of domestic ideology in the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* interviews.²² By using the celebrity interview to highlight the public achievements of women, the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* appeared to reinforce some of the most ingrained gender conventions of the age.

Editor Henrietta Müller’s own views on why the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* had adopted the interview format, however, suggest a different reading—one that interprets the detailed evocations of domestic femininity not as undermining the paper’s political mission but as underpinning it. On December 21, 1889, Müller published another editorial entitled “Our Interviews” in which she argued that interviews with famous men and women served different purposes. Media interest in the private lives of politicians, churchmen, and other prominent male figures acted as a “strong incentive to straight dealing” because men’s accountability increased as their inner motives and values were exposed to public scrutiny.²³ Women, by contrast, were routinely denied the publicity that warranted the demand for accountability in the first place: “Hitherto our opponents have been able to charge women with incapacity generally and specifically, they have been free to deny them powers or faculties which women undoubtedly possess, and at the same time they have been able to suppress those facts in the lives of living women which proved that they possessed them.”²⁴ Interviews with women broke this “barrier of

silence,” not only by showcasing women’s talents and enterprise but also by depicting them “braver and honester in stating their views and in sticking to them.”²⁵

In order to foster a spirit of candor, the *Women’s Penny Paper/Woman’s Herald* repurposed a popular topos from the celebrity interview. Like Yates’s “Celebrities at Home” series, it characterized the home or private working environment as a sacred space—“sanctum” is the word most often used—to which it was a privilege for the interviewer (and the reader, by proxy) to gain access. Yates, however, deployed what Richard Salmon calls a “rhetoric of obstruction”: while appropriating the home as a site of revelation providing brief but meaningful glimpses into the celebrity’s inner self, Yates was at the same time cultivating a narrative of concealment that cast both interviewer and reader as intrusive and voyeuristic. The effect of his “keyhole” journalism “was not so much to dispel the aura of fame as to produce and reinforce it.”²⁶ By contrast, the *Women’s Penny Paper/Woman’s Herald* adopted the technique of imbuing the interview with a sense of unmediated authenticity. Interviewees’ private homes, and the assortment of everyday objects in them, were depicted as directly conducive to openness and trust. The “cool pretty drawing-room with its shaded light” in which Rosalind Ellicott (1857–1924) was interviewed was “favourable to confidences”; Mrs Bedford Fenwick’s “comfortable drawing-room and roaring Christmas fire very quickly thawed any cold, or reticence”; and “soon all restraint vanished” at Mrs Costelloe’s “cheery English breakfast table, with hissing urn, silver dishes, and lovely flowers.”²⁷

Networking the Domestic

In her book *Women Making News: Gender and Journalism in Victorian Britain* (2005), Michelle Tusan has suggested that the *Women’s Penny Paper/Woman’s Herald* built a “print-mediated community based on the commonalities of gender.”²⁸ Borrowing a phrase from the political scientist Benedict Anderson, she argues that recurring features such as the classified

advertisements section and advice column helped draw readers together in an “imagined community” defined “not by the geographical boundaries of nation but by the culturally defined category of gender.”²⁹ Although Tusan redefines Anderson’s original concept to be predicated on gender, she still takes “nation” to function as an implicit category: “In creating a sense of community among readers, the paper emphasized British women’s leadership in creating what it called a ‘Universal Sisterhood.’ . . . By purchasing the paper, ‘true’ women joined this international sisterhood that created a leadership role for middle-class British woman in imperial and domestic matters to ‘defend’ their fellow ‘sisters.’”³⁰ By informing readers about issues such as child marriage in India, the French attitude towards women’s anti-vivisection efforts, and the maltreatment of prisoners in Russia, it empowered them to take responsibility and become actively involved in social reform. Tusan does not list the interview as a community-building feature, but I believe that it is essential to understanding how Henrietta Müller envisaged this “Universal Sisterhood.” More particularly, I want to argue that the interview, with its embrace of the intimate and the private, played a key role in the construction of an international feminist community that went beyond instilling British women with a sense of moral duty towards their “sisters” in other nations.

British women’s movements were deeply divided over tactics, organizational strategies, and key issues such as the vote. From an international perspective, however, early feminists were more united in their cause than ever before. Following the disruptive upheaval of the 1870–71 Franco-Prussian War, Karen Offen writes in *European Feminisms* (2000), the “movement to link women’s activities across national boundaries rebounded between 1876 and 1890.”³¹ In 1878, over 200 delegates from twelve countries convened at the first international women’s rights congress in Paris. Although suffrage was banned from the agenda, the event marked a “new stage in the development of a truly international network among feminist activists.”³² Still,

geographical distances, travel costs, and other practical obstacles made such large-scale meetings difficult to organize. As Bonnie Anderson has pointed out, other transnational connecting strategies were more pervasive at this stage: small gatherings, personal visits, letter writing, and periodicals, which women had been editing, printing, publishing, and contributing to since the mid-nineteenth century.³³ It is within this context of proliferating social ties that I am reading Henrietta Müller's decision to found the weekly *Women's Penny Paper*, "Conducted, Written, Printed and Published by Women," and to include interviews as part of its editorial content.

The French sociologist Bruno Latour defines the social "not as a special domain, a specific realm, or a particular sort of thing, but as a very peculiar movement of re-association and reassembling."³⁴ Social networks, for Latour, are always in the making; they not only consist of interactions among people but also involve myriad non-human entities. His dynamic and performative approach provides a useful framework for understanding how periodicals function as formative actors within emerging feminist movements and more particularly how interviews contribute to this process. The interviewer visits the interviewee in her own personal or professional environment, but it is not until the interview is "reassembled" in print that a network becomes traceable. With each subsequent issue, moreover, actors regroup and interconnect in new ways. As James Mussell has observed, "No single [periodical] issue exists in isolation but instead is haunted by the larger serial of which it is part."³⁵ Week after week, the interview entrenched itself deeper into the social fabric of the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald*, invoking the "larger serial structure" of the paper "through the repetition of certain formal features," such as its front-page position and customary heading with "Interview" in gothic font followed by a vignette-style likeness of the interviewee and her name in small capitals.³⁶ By virtue of the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald's* periodicity, the face-to-face interview

became a site for collecting and connecting a series of human and non-human entities that were in and of themselves not (or not necessarily) related.

A similar sense of social networks as always in motion also underlies the way in which the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* interviewers translated the actual interviews into narrative text. An interview is a potentially static event, not so much in terms of the conversation itself, which is a dynamic process of meaning making in which both interviewer and interviewee participate, but in terms of its spatial settings. A successful interview can take place in a single location, without either party ever leaving their chairs, and this setting can be reported on or left unmentioned. That is not, however, how Yates conceived of the format of the "Celebrities at Home" series, nor how Müller adapted it to serve the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald's* emancipatory project. The *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* interviews abound with geographical references to particular addresses in the London West End, the suburbs of Edinburgh, an apartment off the Rue la Fayette in Paris, a studio in the Via Margutta in Rome, or a "fashionable watering place in America."³⁷ If readers are invited to connect the dots, it is not only because the periodical facilitates what Katie Lanning has called "'tessellated reading,' in which the reader fits texts or pieces of texts together to create a mosaic of meaning."³⁸ It is also because such connections are encouraged by the texts themselves through numerous descriptions of the interviewer travelling to the interview locations, "[taking] the train to Malden, and from thence a lovely walk through the Combe Woods" to visit the founder of the Needlework Guild, Lady Wolverton; "[tramping] from Warwick Station to Sherbourne" to interview rate collector Eleanor Archer; or "[wending] [her] way along Old Kensington to the pretty home of the gifted poetess" Jean Ingelow.³⁹

Roads and railway lines framed the interviews in a narrative of movement linking the public world to the private home. Moreover, they took readers along on a journey that mirrored

some of the paper's own movements as a material object. Recurring advertisements reminded readers that the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* was available at W. H. Smith's bookstalls, thereby hinting at the geographical mobility essential to its consumption. The *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* would have been read and discussed on crowded commuter trains, taken into women's homes, passed on from reader to reader, moving between the public and the private realms much like the interviews it contained. Within readers' own homes, it may have travelled from living room to dining room to study through corridors and stairways quite similar to the ones described by the interviewer as, who, in one instance, is "ushered [. . .] up the softly-carpeted staircase" of Millicent Garrett Fawcett's Gower Street house to meet her in the drawing room.⁴⁰

With each new issue of the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald*, the "trails of associations" between the "heterogeneous elements" of interviews (to quote Latour) became more prominent and more crowded.⁴¹ Ultimately, it mattered very little that Primrose League secretary Catherine Ray's house was on Hampstead Heath and French novelist Thérèse Bentzon's in the Faubourg St. Germain, while the reader's was in St. Leonards-on-Sea.⁴² Through repetition at the level of the narrative and the periodical itself, these private domestic spaces gradually merged into one communal space defined by gender but not limited to a shared British national identity. Rather, the paper's remit stretched across national borders—Müller's "Universal Sisterhood," independent of "race, nation, or creed."⁴³

Networking Feminisms

The *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* interviews also created a space where the seemingly mundane objects of women's domestic lives interconnected with the attributes of their professional pursuits. These ranged from generic references to books, writing tables, and unfinished paintings to more meaningful objects, such as the rare copy of Mary Wollstonecraft's

A Vindication of the Rights of Woman in Florence Fenwick Miller's library or the bust of Audzia de Wolska, founder of the Women's International Library, on the mantelpiece in her house in Paris. One interview meditates on the portraits of celebrities in Eva McLaren's study: "Elizabeth Fry is the presiding genius of the room, while among others are recognised Mrs. Butler, George Eliot, Mrs. Bramwell Booth, Mrs. McLaren and Miss Wigham of Edinburgh. The only portrait of a man admitted into this female coterie is John Stuart Mill."⁴⁴ Occasionally, a private object was equipped with quasi-geographical agency by the interviewer, as in the opening sentence of the interview with the president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, which states, "I found Mrs. Stanton deep in Karl Pearson's *Ethic of Freethought*."⁴⁵

Moreover, the communal space of the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* interviews preserved traces of actual encounters among women that testify to the expanding networks of women's emancipation movements. In addition to the interviewer travelling in and outside Britain to women's private homes, the semi-domestic spaces of London hotels and the homes of London friends functioned as meeting places for interviewees visiting from abroad. In these cases, the interview was often one of many activities of which further evidence was occasionally provided in the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald*. On December 31, 1892, for example, the paper published an interview with the American minister and suffragist Florence Kollock (1848–1925) that had taken place in a hotel in Southampton Row. A week earlier, it reported that Kollock had spoken at a meeting of the Women's Franchise League.⁴⁶ The interview in July 1891 with Mary Brayton Woodbridge, secretary of the World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union, was occasioned by her attendance of the annual meeting of the British Women's Temperance Association in the previous month. It was conducted at the residence of another participant, Mrs. Pearsal Smith, "where she was staying."⁴⁷

One type of encounter recorded in the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* interviews deserves special mention because it points to the key role of periodicals in shaping women's struggle for emancipation as a joint international effort. Among the interviewees were several female editors, including Henrietta Müller herself. On November 28, 1891, Müller reminisced about her reasons for establishing the *Women's Penny Paper*: "One of the things which always humiliated me very much was the way in which women's interests and opinions were systematically excluded from the world's Press. . . . I realised of what vital importance it was that women should have a newspaper of their own through which to voice their thoughts, and I formed the daring resolve that if no one else better fitted for the work would come forward, I would try and do it myself."⁴⁸ Elsewhere in Europe and the United States, women had taken similar initiatives on much the same grounds, either individually or as members of women's organizations. Müller reached out to several of them in the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* by discussing their periodicals in the reviews section, publishing short biographical sketches about them, or by having them interviewed. This included Maria Martin (1839–1910) of the French feminist newspaper *La Citoyenne* (1881–91); Polish-born Marya Chéliga-Loevy (1854–1927), founder of the union universelle des femmes [Universal Women's Union] in Paris and editor of its monthly bulletin; Louise Otto-Peters (1819–95) of the Leipzig-based *Neue Bahnen* (1866–95), organ of the Allgemeiner Deutsche Frauenverein [General German Woman's Association]; Hedwig Kettler (1851–1937), editor of *Frauenberuf* (1887–92) and founder of the radical Deutscher Frauenverein Reform [German Woman's Association "Reform"]; and Julia Ames of the *Union Signal* (1883–1933), the weekly newspaper of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union of the United States.⁴⁹

Many of the interviews with editors described professional settings alongside domestic ones, emphasizing the close connections between the two. The interview with Juliette Adam

(1836–1936) took place in her drawing room “at the Hotel de Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle, on the ground floor of which were the offices of the *Nouvelle Revue*,” the bi-monthly journal that she had founded in 1879.⁵⁰ The editor of the *Lady’s Pictorial*, Ada S. Ballin, showed the interviewer her “editorial den up in the roof” of her house in London, “far away from all disturbance.”⁵¹ Likewise, Maria Martin pondered over the advantages of working from her Paris home: “My home and my office being one, I can attend to my various duties without loss of time, and devote to *La Citoyenne* all the hours I can spare from my other duties.”⁵² At the same time, editors’ private working spaces were also characterized as safe bases from which to reach out to the public world, to readers at home as well as “sister” editors abroad. Ballin’s “editorial den” was a “characteristic sanctum, full of papers, books, writing materials, and a thousand and one odds and ends, complimentary letters, editors’ epistles, MSS., and all the *omnium gatherum* which collect round a busy literary man or woman.”⁵³

The interviews with editors do more than testify to the ways in which their editorial work bled into their personal lives and vice versa. They also provide insight into an emerging transnational feminist print network in which the *Women’s Penny Paper/Woman’s Herald* was one node among many. When Maria Martin was asked how she took over the editorship of *La Citoyenne* from founding editor Hubertine Auclert, she explained: “Kind friends, French and English—yes, and American, Danish and Italian also—have helped me.”⁵⁴ The interview with Julia Ames made such editorial connections even more tangible. Ames had travelled to London to attend the conference of the British Women’s Temperance Association in the summer of 1890 and “occupied a seat in the carriage which represented the *Women’s Penny Paper*” at a rally in Hyde Park.⁵⁵ Deciding that an “acquaintance so pleasantly begun was not allowed to drop,” the interviewer, possibly Henrietta Müller herself, had subsequently invited her for an interview at the offices of the *Women’s Penny Paper/Woman’s Herald*.⁵⁶

Women travelled, and so did texts. The December 22, 1888 interview with stockbroker Amy E. Bell was not only translated and adapted in *Neue Bahnen*, the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* in turn acknowledged the translation in its reviews section, pleased that it had been given proper credit by its "excellent German contemporary."⁵⁷ As the daughter of a German businessman, Müller would have had easy access to the journal in its original language. Similarly, the organ of the Danish Women's Society, *Hvad vi vil* (1888–94), published a translation of the interview with Maria Martin that mentioned the *Woman's Herald* as its source. It also added information, identifying Müller herself as the interviewer and naming *Hvad vi vil* editor Matilde Bajer in a footnote as the Danish friend who had advised Martin as she assumed the editorship of *La Citoyenne*. In the summer of 1891, moreover, an interviewer of *Hvad vi vil* "went over to 86 Strand, London W.C., taking an elevator to the higher regions, where Helene Temple (or Miss Müller, as [she] soon discovered was her real name) had her newspaper's offices."⁵⁸ Interviews had been part of Müller's strategy to amplify women's voices; now her voice was echoing from across different language boundaries.

"How about the Vote?"

As I have argued in this article, the alignment of femininity with domesticity in the opening paragraphs of the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* interviews was not so much in conflict with the paper's feminist agenda as conducive to it. The vivid collages of women's domestic lives provided more than scene-setting backgrounds to the actual interviews. They fostered a sense of transnational communal belonging among readers, contributors, and editors, grounded in the shared spaces and objects of their everyday existence. Moreover, they helped create an atmosphere of trust in which women felt free to answer more probing questions well beyond the purview of the domestic sphere. Like the "peacock blue carpets" and "brass salver tea-tables" in

their drawing rooms, these questions, too, acted as agents in the dense network of relations emerging from the interviewing process.⁵⁹

One pressing question in particular almost immediately took centre stage. Less than a month into the paper's existence, the interviewer asked Mrs. Ashton Dilke's opinion about the vote in a way that would become characteristic of the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* interviews: towards the end of the conversation, seemingly on the spur of the moment. "By and bye we got upon the suffrage question," the November 10, 1888 interview reported.⁶⁰ It then quoted Dilke's response: "I never advocated it . . . on grounds of policy, but it was against my principles *not* to do so."⁶¹ Likewise, when painter Louisa Starr Canziani (1845–1909) confessed to being "not much of a politician," the interview pressed on, saying, "But surely you take an interest in the questions of the day?"⁶² "You are, of course, in favour of Woman's Suffrage?" novelist Amye Reade was asked off-handedly, and the interview with author and traveller Florence Dixie (1855-1905) concluded with "One last question, Lady Florence, how about the vote?"⁶³ Occasionally, an interviewee was taken by surprise—"Do you know, I really have not thought much about the subject!"—or revealed herself to be anti-suffrage: "I think it would be a doubtful experiment, as it would mean giving votes to all, and I am sure many are not competent to have a voice."⁶⁴

What made this casual question so effective was not so much the responses it evoked. After all, responses varied greatly, reflecting Henrietta Müller's ambition to publish a paper "open to reflect the opinions of women on any and all subjects."⁶⁵ Rather, it was the question itself, the domestic settings that facilitated it, and the periodical context in which it could be asked over and over again that was significant. At a time when tensions were high, even among campaigners, the *Women's Penny Paper/Woman's Herald* brought up the issue of women's suffrage on an almost weekly basis, revealing a dogged insistence that belied the impromptu

manner in which the question was put to individual interviewees. Appropriating the sensationalist interview as “one of the strongest weapons which the women’s party possesses,” the *Women’s Penny Paper/Woman’s Herald* united the disparate efforts of early feminism into a joint mission that started with afternoon tea and a question.⁶⁶

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NOTES

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¹ “Our Policy,” 1.

² Arnold, “Up to Easter,” 638.

³ Gray, “Promoting Women,” 152.

⁴ Ibid., 153.

⁵ Rendall, “Recovering Lost Political Cultures,” 52.

⁶ Quoted in Levine, *Victorian Feminism*, 23.

⁷ “Our Policy,” 1.

⁸ Quoted in “What Some of Our Contemporaries,” 7.

⁹ “Interview. Mrs. Priscilla Bright McLaren,” 4. I provide interviewees’ years of birth and death whenever this information is readily available in biographies.

¹⁰ “Interview. Mrs. Ashton Dilke,” 1.

¹¹ “Our Policy,” 1.

¹² Gray, “Promoting Women,” 153.

¹³ Yates, *Celebrities at Home*, 2:17, 343; 3:267–68, 337.

¹⁴ Salmon, *Henry James*, 109.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ “Interview. Miss Catherine Ray,” 589.

¹⁷ “Interview. Miss Jane E. Harrison,” 1; “Interview. Mrs. Margaret Bright Lucas,” 1; “Interview. Miss Catherine Ray,” 589; “Interview. ‘Giana’ Lady Wolverton,” 739; “Interview. Mary Worley,” 121; my italics.

¹⁸ “Interview. Miss Jane E. Harrison,” 1; “Interview. Miss Florence Balgarnie,” 1.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ “Interview. Mrs. Mona Caird,” 421.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Gray, “Promoting Women,” 156.

²³ “Editorials,” 102.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Salmon, “Signs of Intimacy,” 167–68.

²⁷ “Interview. Miss Rosalind Ellicott,” 755; “Interview. Mrs. Costelloe,” 113; “Interview. Mrs. Bedford Fenwick,” 385.

²⁸ Tusan, *Women Making News*, 115.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 116.

³¹ Offen, *European Feminisms*, 150.

³² Ibid.

³³ Anderson, *Joyous Greetings*, 10.

³⁴ Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 7.

³⁵ Mussell, "Repetition," 347.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ "Interview. Pundita Ramabai Sarasvati," 1. See also the interviews with Mrs. Priscilla Bright McLaren, Francesca Stuart Sindici, Mademoiselle Audzia de Wolska, and Mrs. Frank Leslie.

³⁸ Lanning, "Tessellating Texts," 1.

³⁹ "Interview. 'Giana' Lady Wolverton," 739; "Interview. Miss Eleanor Archer," 8; "Interview. Miss Jean Ingelow," 3.

⁴⁰ "Interview. Mrs. Millicent Garrett Fawcett," 4.

⁴¹ Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 5.

⁴² See the interviews with Bentzon (by Matilda Betham-Edwards) and Ray, as well as the correspondence column in the November 3, 1888 issue.

⁴³ "Universal Sisterhood," 471. This creed also appeared in many subsequent issues.

⁴⁴ "Interview. Mrs. Florence Fenwick Miller," 1; "Interview. Mrs. Eva McLaren," 1; "Interview. Mademoiselle Audzia de Wolska," 1.

⁴⁵ "Interview. Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton," 18.

⁴⁶ "Women's Franchise League," 10.

⁴⁷ "Interview. Mrs. Mary Brayton Woodbridge," 611.

⁴⁸ "Interview. Miss F. Henrietta Müller," 916.

⁴⁹ The interviews were published on May 9, 1891, June 4, 1892, March 23, 1889, January 9, 1892, and October 11, 1890, respectively.

⁵⁰ "Interview. Madame Adam," 1.

⁵¹ "Interview. Ada S. Ballin", 313.

⁵² Ibid.; "Interview. Madame Maria Martin," 449.

⁵³ “Interview. Ada S. Ballin,” 313.

⁵⁴ “Interview. Madame Maria Martin,” 449.

⁵⁵ “Interview. Miss Julia Ames,” 601.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ “Reviews,” 7. The translated interview with Bell appeared in the March 3, 1889 issue of *Neue Bahnen*.

⁵⁸ The original reads: “Jeg tog over til Strand 86. London W. C., for der i en Elevator at lade mig bringe op til de højere Regioner, hvor Helene Temple (eller Frøken Müller, som jeg snart fik at vide var hendes sande Navn) havde sit Blads Ekspeditionslokaler.” Reich, “Helene B. Temple,” 165. I am grateful to Maria Damkjær for checking my translation.

⁵⁹ “Interview. Miss Adeline Sergeant,” 531.

⁶⁰ “Interview. Mrs. Ashton Dilke,” 1.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² “Interview. Mdme. Louisa Starr Canziani,” 10.

⁶³ “Interview. Miss Amye Reade,” 85; “Interview. Lady Florence Dixie,” 290.

⁶⁴ “Interview. Mrs. Hunt,” 193; “Interview. Miss Stuart-Snell,” 226.

⁶⁵ “Interview. Miss F. Henrietta Müller,” 916.

⁶⁶ “Editorials,” 102.

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